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ABSTRACT

This booklet was designed to facilitate interactions and communication with the people of Korea by providing information about their customs, attitudes and other cultural characteristics which influence their actions and values. A brief description of Korea is given, which covers the following: geography, weather, history, government, international attitudes, the economy, language, education, transportation and communications, the family, religion, the arts, and sports. Attitudes toward self-esteem and reputation, nonindividualism, and a vertical society are explained through brief descriptions of realistic situations involving American visitors to Korea. A self-test is given after each situation. Information is also given on: greetings, visiting, gifts, gestures, general courtesies, eating, useful Korean phrases, signs, the monetary system, public transportation, housing, diet, family rites, festivals and holidays, work, names, and clothing. A brief bibliography is provided. (SW)

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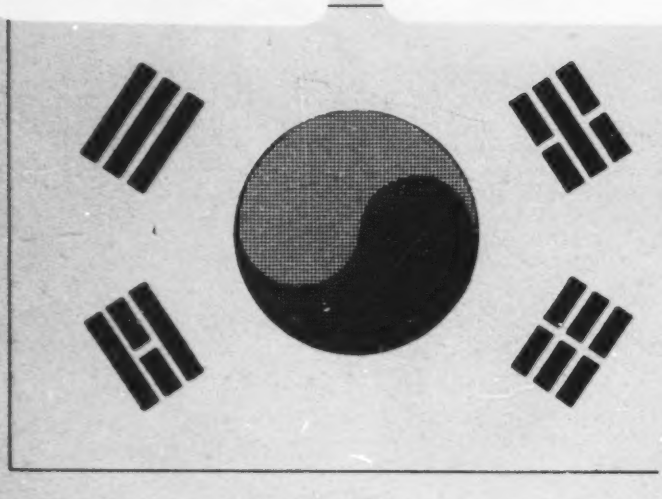

Building Bridges of Understanding

KOREANS

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Brigham Young University LANGUAGE RESEARCH CENTER Communication Learning Aid

The information in this Learning Aid was taken from many sources which were the best available to the editors at the time of preparation. Views expressed or implied in this publication are not necessarily those of Brigham Young University.

The editors have tried to present the characteristics of these people in an objective manner, without undue bias or emphasis. Where we have failed, we apologize for the erroneous impressions that may result and request that comments and corrections be sent to the Language & Intercultural Research Center, 240 B-34, BYU, Provo, Utah, 84602.

The editors are aware of the inherent dangers in using illustrations of a caricature nature since the style depends on distortion or exaggeration of features or mannerisms. The illustrations are intended to enliven the presentation, to make a contrast more graphic, and to help the reader visualize and retain a concept more easily. It is not implied that an idea presented by the illustration does reflect reality.

We appreciate and acknowledge the comments and contributions of various individuals and organizations in the preparation of this publication.

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THE COVER

The official name of the Korean flag is *Taeguk Ki* or the Flag of *Taeguk*. Drawn on the flag is a circle divided equally in a perfect balance. The red upper section represents *yang* and the blue lower one *yin*, ancient symbols of dualism of the cosmos--fire and water, day and night, dark and light, construction and destruction, masculine and feminine, active and passive, heat and cold, plus and minus, and so on. In the four corners are black trigrams arranged in parallel. They also carry the idea of opposition and harmony. The flag reflects the philosophical idea that the infinite universe is well balanced and harmonized despite incessant changes.

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Introduction

It has been said that in some ways you are like all other people, like some other people, and like no other person. Like you, for example, most Koreans would cry at a funeral, laugh at a good joke, and become irritated if bothered while trying to sleep. Love, anger, or fear are found to some degree in all humans. Desires to be accepted and to have peace of mind also are universal. However, different people possess different attitudes and values and have distinct patterns of behavior.

This Learning Aid can help you to communicate better with people who are like you in some ways and not like you in other ways. These ways are not necessarily right or wrong, better or worse; they may be just different, unfamiliar, and perhaps even offensive. This publication discusses some differences in such things as food, laws, customs, religion, language, dress, and basic attitudes which will be encountered in Korea.

People perceive their relationships to those around them by thousands of subtle signs. Something as simple as knowing when and where to walk or sit is a "cultural cue." The loss of familiar cues when entering a new environment may produce strain and frustration. This cultural disorientation is commonly called "culture shock." As one learns to communicate, judiciously using the new cultural cues, the severity and amount of frustration and disorientation are reduced.

This Learning Aid will provide tools to help you recognize the situations that may cause this confusion. It will help you to develop skills which, if successfully applied, will enable you to communicate more effectively with the Koreans and make your association with them pleasant and meaningful.

The basic emphasis of this booklet is to prepare you for actual experiences interacting and communicating with the people of Korea in their environment and culture. Of course, you will enjoy and learn much from this Aid even if your opportunity for a "first hand" experience is limited. Learning about another country may be by *study*, *instruction*, or *experience*.

The hermit kingdom

All of Asia is relatively remote to Westerners. China and Japan, however, have been studied quite thoroughly by American scholars for many years, and during the 19th century, Asian scholars in China and Japan discovered how best to present their customs and culture to the West.

Korea, however, has been somewhat of a "hermit kingdom," having closed herself off to much of the world. Korea was virtually unknown in the world community until it became the scene of a great struggle between United Nations and Communist forces in 1950. With the outbreak of the Korean War (1950-1953), Korea became the focus of world attention in a violent clash between the East and West.

With 84,563 square miles, Korea is about the size of Idaho, Kansas or Minnesota. It is approximately 500 miles in length from north to south.

In the second half of the 1970's the combined population of both North and South Korea has reached about 50 million. South Korea, with only 45 percent of the land mass of the peninsula, claims about 70 percent of the population, or about 34 million people.

Seoul, the capital of South Korea, is the eighth largest city in the world, with a population approaching six million. It lies at approximately the same latitude as St. Louis, Missouri, or Washington, D.C.

Korea is a mountainous peninsula and includes more than 3,000 islands. The north borders Manchuria and the peninsula extends south into the Korea Strait, a narrow ocean strip between Korea and Japan. To the west lies the Yellow Sea and to the east, the Sea of Japan.

The climate varies considerably in different parts of the country. Summers are sometimes quite hot and humid with a rainy season in July and August.

In southern Korea, winters, though cold, are short (many sections have eight frost-free months). Winter in the northwest, on the Manchurian frontier, lasts almost five months with temperatures often below freezing. In the northeastern coastal region, summers are warm, and the cold winters usually last only three months.

A shrimp among whales

When introduced to someone, the first question you usually ask is, "Where do you live?" The next question might be, "Where is that?" If further interested, "What is it like there?" is likely to follow. Asking these questions is an attempt to find similarities or to learn something new. Such conversation may be a stepping stone for increasing understanding.

Before you can best understand and communicate with Koreans, you need to know what is important to them, their customs and attitudes, their personal lifestyle, and the national characteristics which influence their actions and values. Few things are more meaningful to a person than "home." Becoming familiar with the following facts about Korea will help to orient you and remove some "fear of the unknown." It will also help you to begin to understand what is important to the Koreans. This, in turn, will become a basis for effective communication with them.

History

Because Korea is in a geographically strategic location, it became the crossroads of trade, war, and culture between continental Asia and Japan. Attached to the Chinese mainland, it pointed like a finger straight at Japan. Located between these two powerful nations, Korea is indeed a "shrimp among whales," as a Korean proverb describes it. Korea has been the recipient of intimidation, domination, threats, and pressures from foreign powers.

Historically, Korea is the second oldest Asian civilization (China being oldest). Koreans trace the origins of their nation to a legend concerning the founding of a tribal culture on the peninsula in the prehistoric age. This legend describes how Tan'gun, a mythical divine being, descended from heaven to assume leadership of primitive clans and tribes and built his ruling capital near present P'yongyang.

Modern archaeological findings confirm that migratory Mongoloid tribal groups first moved into the peninsula about the second century B.C. They subsequently expanded their settlements in most of the Korean peninsula and southern Manchuria. It is believed that the Korean peninsula was further populated by people of Tungusic stock, who originated in north central Asia and came into Korea five thousand years ago. A very strong Caucasian strain from western Asia also entered the area. These several groups were fused early into a separate, homogeneous race, independent of their neighbors, with traits distinctive from both Chinese and Japanese.

First unified in the seventh century, Korea was a semi-independent state associated with China until the late nineteenth century. Japan annexed Korea in 1910. Until they surrendered at the end of World War II, the Japanese ruled through a repressive colonial regime which generally exploited Korea for its mineral resources, living space, and markets. However, they also brought many modernizing influences to the country.

After Japan capitulated in 1945, the United States and the U.S.S.R. agreed at Yalta to the temporary division of the Korean peninsula at approximately the 38th parallel for the purpose of accepting the surrender of the Japanese forces in Korea. It was the clear intention of the United States to restore independence to Korea. After the Japanese surrender, however, the Soviet Union treated the 38th parallel as an international frontier. Between 1945 and 1947 the Soviet Union rejected numerous efforts to negotiate for the creation of a unified and independent Korea.

In 1948, the area south of the 38th parallel became the Republic of Korea. Syngman Rhee was its first president. The Soviet Union established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea north of the 38th parallel.

The Korean conflict began on June 25, 1950, when North Korean forces invaded the Republic of Korea. In the ensuing collective defense action, sixteen United Nations countries contributed troops and other member countries furnished medical or other assistance.

The Korean War continued until 1953 when an armistice agreement was signed at Panmunjom. This document continues in force since a peace treaty has not yet been negotiated.

Throughout the postwar period both the North and South Korean governments have repeatedly affirmed their desire for reunification of the Korean peninsula, but no progress has been made. There were no direct communications between the two governments or their citizens until 1971, when the two countries agreed to hold talks through their respective Red Cross societies with the stated aim of reuniting the many Korean families separated during the Korean conflict.

In 1972, North Korea and the Republic of Korea announced an agreement to work toward national reunification through peaceful means and to end the atmosphere of mutual hostility. Both the Red Cross talks and those initiated between the two governments have virtually been broken off now (1976).

President Gerald Ford visited South Korea in 1974 to reaffirm continuing American friendship. When the Communist nations on the United Nations Security Council refused to admit South Korea to the UN in 1975, the United States vetoed the admission of Communist North and South Vietnam.

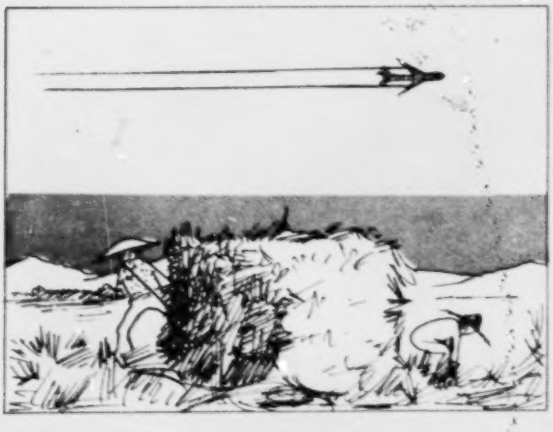
Government

SOUTH KOREA

The South Korean Government has executive, legistlative, and judicial divisions. The executive branch is headed by the president. He is assisted by a national council headed by a premier whom he appoints. A unicameral legislature and a separate judiciary ostensibly function much like their counterparts in the United States, although the presidential involvement in and management of the legislative branch of government is more apparent in Korea.

The Korean government structure was considerably altered by Syngman Rhee, President of the First Republic of Korea (1948-1960). In 1960 a nationwide uprising by students led to the resignation of President Rhee. A military coup followed, and the interim government was headed by General Park Chung-Hee. General Park was elected president in 1963. In 1972, he imposed martial law on South Korea, closing the schools and establishing press censorship while he arranged changes in the nation's constitution to permit his reelection every six years. In 1975, President Park made it a crime for anyone to criticize the constitution or to criticize the government to foreigners.

Because Koreans do not enjoy the same personal freedoms as Americans, politics is a subject of sensitivity in Korea and should be avoided by those who are not informed about local conditions.



NORTH KOREA

The governmental apparatus of North Korea is completely controlled by the country's Communist party, which dominates the government and economy through an elaborate party structure and government and military bureaucracies. A few minor parties have been permitted to exist to present a facade of representative government. There are occasional indications of tension over policy decisions between military and civilian groups within the party. Little is known about the actual lines of power and authority in the North Korean government in contrast with the elaborate formal structure set forth in its constitution.

International attitudes

Although racial similarities as well as cultural similarities are shared by all the countries of the Far East, each nation does have factors that are unique. While both the Chinese and Japanese have had some political and cultural influence in Korea's past, Koreans have been able to preserve a distinct national identity.

Historically, there has been more intercourse between the Chinese and people of the North than with the people of southern Korea, establishing a historic precedent for the two cultural spheres which now exist.

There has been a steady rise in the nationalistic feelings of the South Koreans recently. They also feel a great deal of gratitude to the United States for liberating them from the Japanese and for helping them defend themselves against the invasion of the North Koreans. Though some of the edge seems to have been wearing off their enthusiasm recently, South Koreans still hold a great deal of affection for Americans, individually and collectively. Koreans will generally treat you cordially and affectionately simply because you are from the United States.

However, urban Koreans have adopted many of the customs of the United States in their actions. They no longer have a fear of offending and are more outspoken in dealing with foreigners. Some youths who consider the Americans rich and arrogant intruders have treated the Americans with less respect. In the rural areas there is still a deep appreciation, respect, and even reverence for the American visitor.

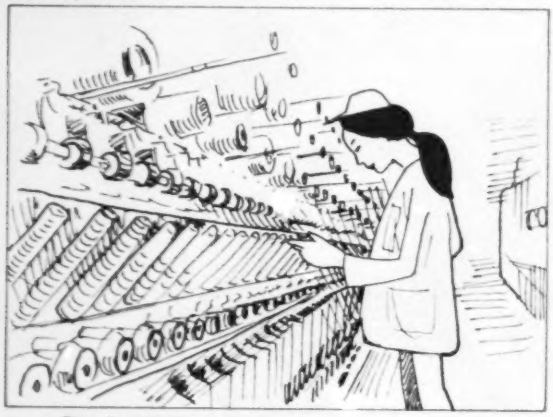
Economy

Agriculture in the North was collectivized following the Korean War. Industry had already been nationalized. Economic progress has been notable, educational facilities have been expanded and illiteracy and extreme poverty sharply reduced.

However, life in the North is highly regimented. Consumer goods are scarce, travel is tightly controlled, and freedom of expression is restricted. North Korea is more mountainous, and agriculture plays a much smaller role than

in the South. Fifty-four percent of the North Korean population is employed in industry.

In South Korea, considerable economic dislocation occurred when the primarily agricultural and densely populated South was separated from the industrial North in 1945 and put under United States occupation. In the decade between 1945 and 1954, international assistance was directed toward providing food and shelter, repairing war damage, and laying the groundwork for economic development.



The South Korean people proudly compare their unprecedented economic progress since 1955 with the quick economic recovery of the Federal Republic of Germany after World War II. By the standards of the United States, Korean economic standards are still relatively poor. However, the standard of living is rapidly improving. In recent years a middle class has begun to emerge.

Korea's economy relies heavily on her exports. Recently, with the industrial development, the emphasis has been on the manufacture of consumer goods for shipment abroad.

A large percentage of South Koreans is still employed in agriculture. Efforts have been made to raise agricultural productivity, to improve marketing systems, to renovate farming techniques, and to increase the incomes of farmers.

Forestation and conservation projects will provide for the effective use of forest resources. Since the 1960's the fishing industry has steadily expanded from coastal to deep-sea fishing and fish cultivation.

Within the first three years of the First Five-Year Economic Development Plan, starting in 1962, Korea became self-sufficient in the supply of textiles, paper, fertilizer, cement, and oil products. The electrical, automobile, shipbuilding, and electronics industries are spearheading growth in exports.

The Social Welfare Project Law went into force in 1970 with the slogan "Freedom from Poverty and Diseases." The medical insurance system has been expanded, and laws for employment insurance and welfare for the aged are to be legislated.

Major projects are being undertaken in Korea to improve health and sanitation. Programs designed to protect the rights and interests of the workers, promote overseas employment, and train technicians to meet the increasing demands of rapid industrialization are also being carried out.

Though personal incomes have greatly increased in South Korea, the average income is just enough to provide necessities for the family.

Education

History records the establishment of a university in Korea by A.D. 327. Since that time, Confucian education has been overwhelmingly adopted by Koreans.

Education still remains the most highly valued aspect of Korean culture. Education now has a dual significance. First, Koreans value education from an intrinsic desire to gain knowledge and wisdom. Education is also seen as an avenue to social mobility, wealth, and power.

By far the most popular and constantly used Korean word of address is the term "teacher." It is intended as a term of highest respect. The most socially acceptable means of achieving success in Korea is through education, and through association with a particular teacher or group of teachers.

The six-year elementary school course is compulsory from ages six to eleven. Primary school graduates advance to middle schools without entrance examinations. The basic subjects offered in the three-year middle school are Korean language, Korean history, social life, mathematics, natural science, physical education, vocational training, home economics, music, art, and foreign language.

Examinations are required to enter high school. About half of the high schools are for general education and the rest for vocational training. A general education is considered vastly superior to vocational training.

Higher educational institutions include two-year junior colleges, four-year universities, and two-year postgraduate schools. Vocational and technical "know-how" dominate the two-year junior college curriculum.

One is admitted to the university only if he succeeds in preliminary college entrance qualification examinations administered by the government and then in entrance examinations given by each college and university. Most universities offer M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, though they are generally more difficult to obtain than their counterparts in the United States.

There are many private middle and high schools and colleges which more wealthy and promising students may attend. The most prestigious university is Seoul National University.

Transportation and communication

The Seoul-Pusan Expressway links the capital in the northern reaches of South Korea with the nation's second largest port city on the southern coast. This highway, as well as the Seoul-Inchon, Taejon-Kwangju, and Pusan-Kwangju expressways, have been highly instrumental in accelerating the economic development of Korea.

Korean Airlines (KAL) operates domestic and international service. Inter-city transportation is principally by train, bus, or taxi.

A total of twenty-six daily papers are now published in Seoul. Korea has two major news agencies which provide wire services to major world news services.

Korea's first radio station went into operation in 1927 with one kilowatt output power. The number of broadcasting stations has now increased to forty-eight. There are eleven television broadcasting stations in Korea.

Religion

The underlying ethos of Korea is Shamanism, but the people have been influenced strongly by Buddhism, and in social affairs by Confucianism.

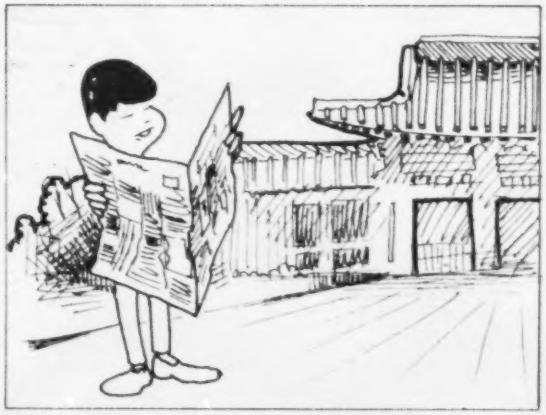
Shamanism was the religion of ancient Koreans for whom high mountains, rivers, big rocks, or the earth were considered sacred.

Introduced into the country in A.D. 327, Buddhism has the longest history among the organized religions in Korea.

Confucianism, which has a profound bearing on the interpersonal relationships of the daily life among Koreans, had its golden days during the Yi dynasty (1932-1910), when it was the state religion. There are over four million Confucianists in Korea.

The most influential of the newer native Korean religions is Ch'ondo-gyo, founded in the mid-nineteenth century upon a belief that every man represents heaven. There are approximately one million members of the Ch'ondo-gyo. Other recently established churches are increasing in number and include such religions as Taejong-gyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way).

Catholic Christianity was introduced into Korea in 1783 by Korean diplomatic delegates who came into contact with the Bible in China. Early Catholic converts were severely persecuted. Protestantism was introduced a century later, in 1884, and met with immediate and widespread success. Thus, the four million Korean Christians are mostly Protestant. Christianity is growing at four times the population growth rate.



Language

It is a common misconception shared by Westerners that all Asian languages are like Chinese. Though Japan and Korea have borrowed Chinese characters and the written characters have generally the same meaning in all Oriental languages, they are pronounced quite differently. Chinese and Korean are actually as dissimilar as English and Russian.

Koreans used Chinese characters exculsively until about five hundred years ago. They still use the Chinese characters quite liberally and roughly one-quarter of the Korean vocabulary is based on Chinese derivatives.

Grammatically, Korean is more similar to the Japanese language than it is to Chinese, though shared vocabulary between Japan and Korea is negligible. In pronunciation, however, Korean and Chinese are monosyllabic languages (the words consist of one syllable only), whereas Japanese, like English, is polysyllabic.

Korean is also written with phonetic characters (*hangul*), invented in 1446. The language also includes many words of English origin such as:

taxi	coffee
bus	beefsteak
ball pen	juice
necktie	grape
white shirt	ice cream
tennis	sandwich
pop song	cola
all right (OK)	milk

North Koreans speak a different dialect than that which is spoken in the South, but each can easily understand the other. The vocabulary has also been altered considerably because of the influence of Communist propaganda. North Koreans have completely eliminated the use of Chinese characters since 1945.

English is a required subject in South Korean schools, so all reasonably educated Koreans have a minimal knowledge of English. However, few Koreans will have sufficient conversational ability to be able to communicate effectively with you in English. You will probably have more success in communicating and avoid possible misunderstanding if you work with an interpreter.

The family

The family is an important basis for Korean culture and civilization. The Korean family is an extended group of multiple generations, which often all live in the same household. The family is held together by the sense of duty and obligation of its members. Filial piety, or the willingness to fulfill one's duties toward one's parents and family, is one of the greates virtues recognized in the Korean culture.

Traditionally, the father dines alone. But with the advent of television, the dinner hour is much the same as in the United States. Socially, a Korean puts more emphasis on friends than family. However, love is expressed in the Korean family, especially on the part of the mother. The father does not often express his love openly and demands a great deal of respect.

The oldest son in each generation has all legal claims to the property and fortune of the family. He also becomes the heir to the right of authority in the extended family unit when his generation becomes the oldest.

Dating between young people is of recent origin. If practiced, it is often in groups of two or three couples or two of one sex and one of the other. Movies are the most popular entertainment. Young people also enjoy hiking, taking small trips, and socializing at bakeries and tea houses.

Relationships between families are for all purposes permanent. Marriages are usually arranged by the families involved, and careful negotiation between families precedes any marriage to assure all concerned that the union is advantageous not only for the bride and bridegroom, but for the two families as well. However, the family has become increasingly more westernized in concept in recent years. Modern and urban Koreans are abandoning the extended family for households consisting only of parents and their unmarried children.

The arts

The Koreans have developed an artistic culture of their own. They excelled in all the arts--sculpture, painting, architecture and ceramics. Their famous celadon pottery (tenth to fourteenth centuries) is acclaimed throughout the world. Ancient Korean paintings were done mostly on pieces of paper and silk cloth in india ink and water colors. Western influences were evident in Korea by the end of the nineteenth century.

Calligraphy, the art of writing in brush and india ink, was a favorite hobby among learned men and esteemed as chief criteria among gentlemanly accomplishments. It was also a recommended hobby for learned ladies.

Koreans have always expressed themselves through music and dance. Traditional Korean music, using the five-tone scale, sounds simpler than Western music which uses seven tones. Korean folk dances are well known for the delicate movements of limbs and shoulders. Influenced by Western culture since the late nineteenth century, modern music and dance have also developed in Korea.

Korean drama consists of mask plays, puppet shows, classical opera, melodrama, and modern drama. The first Korean film was made in 1921.

Sports

Koreans participate in all types of sports. Popular sports are soccer, basketball, baseball, volleyball, swimming, hiking, tennis, judo, and *Taekwondo* (karate).

Communicating with Koreans

As you anticipate an experience in a culture different than your own, you no doubt expect certain communication problems. The mistake most of us make is to assume that our problems in communication stem only from language differences and that the problem can be resolved by appropriate language training.

However, verbal communication comprises only a portion of the total communicative process. There is mounting evidence that nonverbal cues, which are often too subtle to even be conscious, often communicate far more than words. So, considering communication in a broader sense, the difficulty is not limited to a verbal language barrier. Communication involves ideas, images, and symbolic meaning. Communication problems arise when life experiences and cultures of the communicators are not the same.

The sections that follow will cover the following important facets of communication:

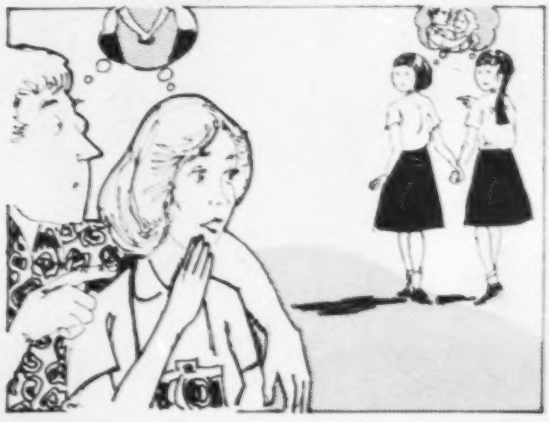
* How and why people think and act the way they do
* The language itself
* Nonverbal communication
* Behavioral do's and don'ts
* "Survival Signs" to read and understand
* Making daily interactions easier for you and the Koreans

A people to get to know

Apart from "places to go and things to see," there are "people to know" in Korea. Communication goes much deeper than language. Behaviorisms, ways of thinking, and manners of living also relate to communication.

Since Korea is usually thought of as part of East Asia, or the Mysterious East, most Westerners tend to think of Koreans, as of all Orientals, as "inscrutable" and therefore impossible to understand. There are a great many differences between Koreans and Americans, to be sure, but Koreans are by no means impossible for you to understand. Individual Koreans are human, as you will find for yourself even if your stay among them is short.

Individuals in every culture use various devices to disguise their true feelings and attitudes in some situations. The difference between a Korean and an American is that each uses a different system of expressing or disguising his emotions in order to be accepted in his own culture. Furthermore, some emotions are properly shown in one culture that are not proper in another. For example, a Korean may show his affection for a member of his own sex by publicly holding hands or by other physical contact, but public contact between opposite sexes is prohibited. In the United States exactly the opposite is true. Members of the same sex do not hold hands at all, and opposite sexes may quite properly hold hands in public.



Because there are so many differences between American and Korean cultures, and because the Koreans have a highly developed system of etiquette designed to protect the honor of the individual and his position in society without bringing offense to others, it is very difficult to portray accurately the national character of Korea. In many cases, Korean culture will dictate exactly the opposite of what is true in the United States.

For example, in the United States the emphasis is on mastering the world through active and aggressive assertion of will, while Koreans tend to receive passively whatever fate may bring them. They consider it beyond their power to alter nature. Koreans also may appear passive at times because they value friendship over being right all of the time. (See Theme I.)

An American tends to be exclusive in his thought, while a Korean can be very inclusive to the point of apparant inconsistency. The American is either Protestant or Catholic, liberal or conservative, but never both. A Korean, on the other hand, may simultaneously espouse Buddhism, Shamanism, Confucianism and even Christianity with no apparent conflict in his own mind. He tends to see all as just a part of the whole scheme of religion in general and includes each in his own personal philosophy.

Three basic factors have determined the nature of Korean thought and action as a nation. First, Korea's geographic situation between the Mongols, Chinese, and Japanese makes her a "no man's land" that has been contested and conquered several times throughout history. Second, Confucianism and its emphasis on social propriety, harmony with the nonself, self-control, and a reverence for the past have had a profound effect on Korean philosophy and life. Finally, poverty and overcrowding restrict the actions and possibilities for success of the Koreans.

These three factors have developed in Koreans a strong will to live, an amazing power for endurance, and a strong group identification characterized by the submission of individual will. These influences may help you to understand some of the unique characteristics of the Korean people.

In every culture certain feelings or assumptions influence how the members of that culture act and determine what value they place on certain things and ideas. Descriptions of these feelings and assumptions are here called *themes*.

Themes are a way of discussing a culture by using examples of behavior and attitudes. For example, North Americans seem to believe that the most admirable trait is to do well in business and become wealthy. This theme is illustrated by the fact that Americans treat the wealthy men of their communities with the greatest respect. On the other hand, the Asian cultures seem to believe that the most admirable trait is wisdom, and they respect those who are older and wiser, or better educated.

Knowing the characteristic assumptions of the culture makes it possible to predict how the members of that culture will act in situations that involve the theme. For instance, North Americans are a future-conscious people. They believe that promptness is very important and that tardiness is an indication of indifference and inefficiency. A Korean may be confused by the American who always seems to be in a hurry, who expects others to be on time for appointments, and who apologizes for being a couple of minutes late. Koreans tend to be more aware of the past and present. If they are presently enjoying an experience, they will try to prolong it as much as possible so that it will become an occasion worth remembering. This often causes Koreans to be late for or to miss altogether, future appointmemts that may not seem so rewarding.

A special exercise is used to illustrate these themes. First, a lifelike situation is presented in which a person like you is in a position that could prove frustrating or embarrassing to all involved. Inherent in each situation is an underlying way of thinking or doing (a theme) that is part of the Korean culture. As you read each incident, identify the theme. Try to imagine the other circumstances in which it might occur.

Next, the theme will be discussed as it relates to cultural concerns. Finally, another situation and a variety of possible reactions will be described. Using what you have learned from your study, you are to choose one reaction. The various alternatives are then discussed.

Several significant, general cultural themes found throughout Korea have been chosen. As you understand and apply these principles of communication, you will adjust to other situations more easily.

The many admirable, attractive qualities of the Korean people will become evident in your own experience with them. The themes presented on the following pages discuss some factors of Korean culture that are in direct opposition to American patterns and which may not seem so attractive to you as those characteristics you have in common with these people.

Theme I

No comment

Mr. Jones was becoming exasperated. He had been sent to assist the new teachers in implementing a new program for the school and to help them overcome any problems they encountered. But so far no teacher in the meeting had admitted any real problems had arisen.

When the Korean director of the school approached him after the meeting, Mr. Jones explained his feelings to him.

"Frankly, Mr. Kim, I don't feel that I have been of much service to you here."

Greatly surprised, Kim assured Mr. Jones, "But just the opposite is true! You have given us a great deal of valuable information in this meeting."

"But during the meeting, when I asked for problems or questions from the men, they were silent," Jones explained. "When I finally insisted that they must be encountering some difficulty in assimilating the new approach into their organization, only a few raised their hands, and then they mentioned very minor problems that they are perfectly capable of handling themselves. Surely their understanding of the program is not so complete and its implementation is not as easily accomplished as they implied. Why don't they let me help them with their problems? What is hampering our discussion of the program?"

Kibun and face

Mr. Jones is very conscientious about fulfilling his responsibility. He has been sensitive to the attitudes of the men with whom he is working, and it seems that only his lack of familiarity with Korean culture hinders his full effectiveness in advising them. The pattern of Korean culture that prevents the men in the group from speaking freely of their difficulties to Mr. Jones is the concept of "face" and that of *kibun*.

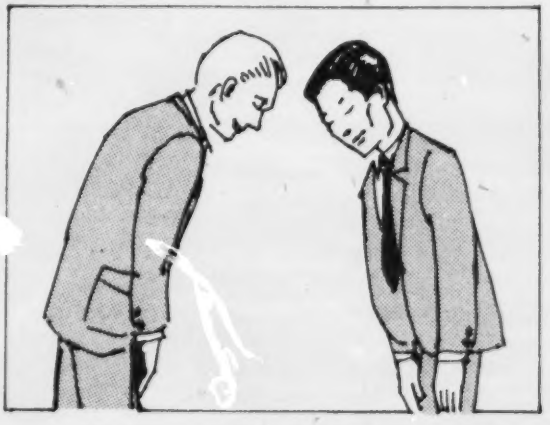
Kibun may be defined as the individual's morale, self-esteem and his general good feeling. It is important that his "face," or his reputation, be preserved at all times. This places great emphasis on preserving the good feelings of everyone at all costs. Because of this emphasis on feelings and appearance, it is often more important that things appear well than that they actually <u>be</u> well. In other words, it may be considered a severe breach of courtesy to upset a person's feelings.

In audience with their king, ancient Korean court officials would never upset the king's *kibun* nor allow him to think them incapable of handling their duties by discussing their problems with him. The practice has continued through all the strata of Korean society.

Mr. Jones was viewed by the Koreans as a visiting dignitary whose favorable *kibun* must be preserved in order to preserve their own face. By not discussing their problems with Mr. Jones, these men were not refusing to cooperate with him but were attempting to save his *kibun*--his general sense of composure and well being--and to avoid losing face with him by letting him know they were incapable of handling their problems themselves.

If Mr. Jones could have recognized his own position in the minds of the committee members and their own need to save face, he could have had a great deal more success by avoiding direct discussion of their actual situation. They would have been perfectly willing to have discussed hypothetical situations which might happen to an inexperienced teacher. In a meeting, one may criticize a group severely and no one may feel hurt, but it is very easy to offend someone if such criticism is attempted on a direct personal level or if one person is singled out for criticism.

Koreans are very tactful in their dealings with other people. When something displeases



them, they make their feelings known indirectly in a way that will not injure a friendship which they cherish. Circumlocution is usually an effective means of broaching potentially unpleasant subjects and preserving favorable *kibun* in Korea. It is most often important how you say something rather than what you say.

Kibun is manifest on virtually every level of Korean society. All Koreans greet with the question, "Are you in peace?" and part with the admonition, "Go in peace." Many Koreans are generous to their own hurt to guests or visitors rather than upset the *kibun* of the other party. Both lose face if the guest is not entertained properly. When ordering a suit from a tailor in Korea, an American may have received the promise that it would be completed in two or three days, only to return and find it unfinished. When asked why he promised an impossibility, the tailor may have replied, "It would upset you if I said the suit would not be ready for ten days."

Traditionally, Korean justice aims at proving that no injustice has been committed rather than proving that one party is entirely right and the other entirely wrong. This approach makes it much easier to reconcile differences between individuals. Korean justice emphasizes the harmony that exists and plays down the discord. American justice does the opposite. The Korean approach is a more positive one and often is more effective in rehabilitating offenders as it recognizes that in most offensive situations both parties are usually partially right.

The Korean perception of time also reflects the emphasis on *kibun*. Koreans are not as concerned about punctuality as most Americans because people's feelings are regarded as more important than split-second punctuality.

Rituals of courtesy, indirection, and formality in both behavior and dress protect the individual's honor and privacy. Koreans also show reserve in telling where they are going and what they are doing, thinking, or planning. Traditional Koreans consider the unrestrained disclosure of this information a sign of weakness and vulgarity.

It is possible to speak about embarrassing situations, however. Precede your statement with "Frankly speaking. . . ." Even then, it is wise to do it in privacy, and if possible, through a mutual friend.

Although modern Koreans tend to be more open than their fathers were, the most genteel Koreans retain this system of reserve in every sense.

Summary

KOREANS ARE VERY TACTFUL IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH OTHER PEOPLE. *KIBUN* STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING THE GOOD FEELING OF EVERYONE AT ALL COSTS. BECAUSE OF THE EMPHASIS ON FEELINGS AND APPEARANCE, KOREANS FEEL THAT ACCORD CAN BETTER BE ACCOMPLISHED PRIVATELY THROUGH THE INTERVENTION OF MUTUAL FRIENDS THAN BY PUBLICLY CAUSING EMBARRASSMENT TO ANYONE. IT IS A SEVERE BREACH OF COURTESY TO INJURE ANOTHER'S *KIBUN*. TO AVOID THIS, KOREANS MAKE THEIR FEELINGS KNOWN INDIRECTLY AND DISCREETLY. KOREANS, WISHING TO PRESERVE THEIR *KIBUN*, WILL AVOID ANYONE WHO CONSTANTLY DESTROYS THEIR *KIBUN*, WHETHER THIS IS DONE INTENTIONALLY OR UNKNOWINGLY.

Time to test yourself

During your visit to Korea you have ordered a large amount of building material for the completion of a new office building being constructed. The owner of the firm furnishing the materials took your order himself and promised delivery the next day. A week passes and you still have not received your order.

What do you do?

1. For fear of offending the owner you realize he is a busy man and you continue waiting for your order.
2. You become impatient and go to the owner, demanding either immediate delivery or that your money be refunded.
3. Realizing the next day delivery was probably an impossible promise, you again visit the owner and tactfully remind him of your order and ask about its progress.
4. You call the owner every day and ask him when you can expect delivery.

NOTE REASONS FOR RESPONSE SELECTED. SEE BELOW FOR ANSWERS

1. Don't overlearn the lesson! If you have too much consideration for the owner's *kibun* you may never receive your merchandise. True, the owner won't be upset, but he may take advantage of your apparent good nature.
2. Not only have you upset the *kibun* of the owner, but both of you have lost face--he because he has upset your *kibun*, and you because you have made such an open display of your displeasure. Your order may well be delayed even longer.
3. You have shown regard for the owner's *kibun* while still saving face for yourself as a cultured man. Still you have let the owner know of your concern for your order and will likely receive it within one or two days. If you can remain patient and not actually expect the original promise to be fulfilled, you will preserve the good feeling for further transactions with the company and for better service in the future.
4. Here you are using the *kibun* or face of the owner as a weapon to receive your shipment. By daily asking him of the progress of the order, you force him to expedite its delivery or lose face. Although this may not be as socially polite, it is likely to achieve results. Even if the owner does not view you as a highly cultured gentleman, he will respect you as a shrewd businessman. So the rules of *kibun* are relative to the situation in which they are applied.

Theme II

Thanks but no thanks

"I'm greatly honored for your consideration of my skills, Mr. Gardner," said Mr. Ji, "but I prefer to remain with my present employer."

Mr. Gardner was very discouraged as he left the bank. Mr. Ji was the third man he had approached today, and none of them had accepted.

Gardner was opening an accounting firm in Pusan. Besides hiring some recent college graduates, he was anxious to employ some experienced men to supervise the company. His neighbor, Mr. Hahm, was a banker and had given him the names of several qualified men who were then working for other financial institutions. Gardner felt confident he could convince several of them to join his firm because he could offer a considerable increase in salary and other benefits.

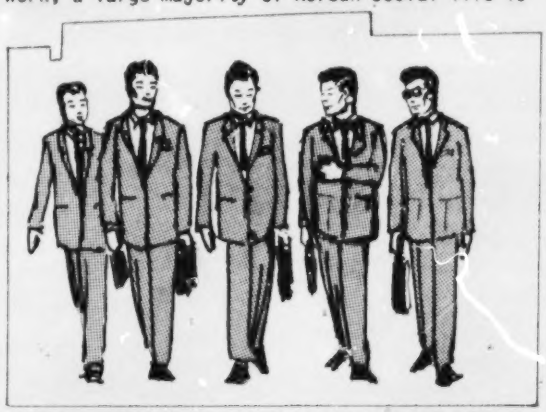
Visiting with Cho Sun-woo, Gardner had been impressed with his abilities. He felt certain this man would accept his invitation to join his new company. But Sun-woo's response was the first of many similar reactions to his offer of a better position and higher wages. Sun-woo had been grateful for being thought capable of filling the new position, but he did not wish to change employers.

Now, after his third rejection, Gardner was very confused. "What kind of hold do employers have on people here?" he wondered. "Why should anyone feel so obligated to a job that he would refuse all other opportunities to improve his financial position?"

Nonindividualism

Oriental philosophy views existence as a whole made up of many parts rather than a conglomerate of many individuals. Man is "one with the universe." Because identification with natural and social harmony are watchwords in Korean life, nonindividualism is perhaps the most basic attitude in Oriental philosophy.

Groups are the most important units in Korean society. The individual is important only through the prestige of the group with which he is affiliated. In addition to associating at work, a large majority of Korean social life is



affiliated with organized groups--school classes, athletic groups, professional organizations, and even the family group. All that are seen as beneficial accomplishments in Korea come about through established groups.

This emphasis on collective participation is reflected in the stability and permanence Koreans expect from the groups with which they identify. The group involvement must be a reciprocal relationship. In return for their loyalty to the group they expect complete support and loyalty from the group. Workers are accustomed to life tenure once they are committed to an employer. They will seldom transfer jobs, even for higher pay or greater prestige.

Closely related to these attitudes is Theme III which follows.

Time to test yourself

Your firm is opening a branch office in Seoul. You have been sent to arrange for office space. Your colleague is making some preliminary contacts with Korean businessmen who, it is hoped, will join the firm when it opens.

He talks to two men who have moved from another part of the country and are looking for a secure position in a new company. They seem interested and qualified, but your colleague reports that they cooled considerably when they learned you had reserved only two floors of a downtown building for company offices.

What can you do?

1. Offer them a larger salary and a few other special benefits.
2. Emphasize the opportunities and prestige available to them through their employment in a prominent American company.
3. Forget about them and look for people who are not concerned about the details of company location and management.
4. Consider locating an entire building for use by the company. An investment in real estate will create a sense of solidarity and stability.

NOTE REASONS FOR RESPONSE SELECTED. SEE BELOW FOR ANSWERS.

1. Koreans look for more than material promise in their employment. The success and satisfaction they receive is based on the group with which they are associated--in this case, the business firm that employs them. Before joining your company, they will determine whether it has status and prestige, and also whether it will be "profitable" as a lifetime employer to whom they can pledge their loyalty, regardless of financial remuneration. The social implications of employment are extremely important.
2. Although Koreans tend to be more friendly toward the United States than some Far Eastern peoples, it is presumptuous to suppose that "the prestige of a United States company" will be sufficient to influence a prospective employee to join your firm. Even more important than the distinction of a company is the promise of permanence and security.
3. You'll be hard pressed to find Koreans who aren't concerned about the reliability of their employer. Some United States organizations appear "temporary" to them--U.S. personnel are changed frequently; the company is headquartered in a few rented suites. Companies will gain who can make an initial investment that will help them appear well-established and permanent.
4. Stability is important to Koreans. They need to feel your company is firmly established. You must assure your employees of their permanence in your company. Companies which can afford to own an entire building rather than rent one or two floors will win the confidence of Korean job seekers. Remember, you can expect unwavering loyalty from your employees only if you can reciprocate with a guarantee of permanent employment with your organization.

Theme III

Climbing the social ladder

Mr. Black was making a second trip to Korea. The previous year he had helped select a new branch coordinator for the Kwangju branch. He had enjoyed his interview with the man who filled the position, Mr. Chang, and was interested to learn how the Kwangju branch was progressing under Mr. Chang's leadership.

So Mr. Black was greatly surprised when he asked the Honam district supervisor, Mr. Yun, now the branches were doing in his district and heard his reply:

"All the branches are doing well, Mr. Black, except for the Kwangju branch. We're having some difficulty there. Since Mr. Chang has been the branch coordinator it has been just standing still."

"That really surprises me, Mr. Yun. As you know, I had a rather lengthy interview with Mr. Chang last year. At that time I was quite impressed with his ability and potential."

Mr. Yun nodded his agreement. "Your assessment of Mr. Chang was correct," he said. "He is one of the most able men in our entire district. And he has been eager to fulfill his responsibilities as branch coordinator."

"I'm afraid I don't understand, then. Aren't the branch employees supporting Chang?"

"Oh, they are all quite willing to help him to make the branch progress. No, I'm afraid the problem is one that must be overcome by Mr. Chang himself," said Mr. Yun. "You see, several of the more capable employees of the Kwangju branch are graduates of the local university and are some years older than Mr. Chang, so he is hesitant to ask them to help."

"I still can't understand," said Mr. Black. "Doesn't Mr. Chang realize we are all equal in this organization?"

A vertical society

The difficulty that the Kwangju branch coordinator has experienced is most likely not due to Mr. Chang's individual personality or skills, but to his "position" in a pre-conceived set of social priorities. The social relationships in Korea are the result of historical precedents. Proper interpersonal relationships are the foundation of Korean Confucianism.

In the United States, relationships are usually seen as between peers or near equals--what may be called a horizontal society. Although some variation in social classes does exist, when people in the United States work together, it is generally in a spirit of equality.

An analysis of words in each language may explain the difference in attitude evident in the Korean culture. The English word "cooperate" means essentially to work together. On the other hand, the Chinese character for cooperation--協 --is composed of three elements of strength 十力力 put together from different directions with a cross. Thus, in Korea, cooperation is not a united effort in a given direction, but rather each man pulls in a different direction. An organization progresses through the various efforts of unequals.

The point that is pertinent to Mr. Chang's case concerns the Confucian principles of relationships. Proper relationships are all-important in Korea. There is little concept of real equality as the American views it. Korean relationships are alomst entirely between unequals and are, therefore, vertical.

Koreans reflect this outlook in virtually every aspect of their lives, especially in speech.

For the foreigner to learn to speak Korean correctly, it is necessary for him to know the basic rules of social relationships. Strict protocol, language forms, proper bows, and an attitude of humility and deference must be exhibited to all social superiors, regardless of personal feelings. Those who are better educated, those who are older, or who have held "office" longer are generally recognized as the most respected in Korean society. So naturally Mr. Chang, who is younger and may not be as well educated as many of the others in his branch, feels a reticence about supervising them.

This aspect of interpersonal relations also includes the cultural trait of personalism--the tendency to act out of obligation to specific people.

In a more formal relationship this would be particularly evident. For example, a secretary would probably not leave the office before her boss, even if the daily work is over. Nor is it likely that the driver of a company owned car would refuse to drive the manager's family on a Sunday picnic.

Among peers this feeling of mutual obligation is also cultivated. In fact, the greater the number of close personal acquaintances a man has, the greater his personal influence and prestige.

Summary

PROPER RELATIONSHIPS ARE ALL-IMPORTANT IN KOREA. MOST RELATIONSHIPS ARE NOT BETWEEN EQUALS OR PEERS BUT ARE ALMOST ENTIRELY BETWEEN UNEQUALS. IN THIS VERTICAL SOCIETY, STRICT PROTOCOL REQUIRES THAT ALL SOCIAL SUPERIORS BE TREATED WITH GREAT RESPECT, REGARDLESS OF PERSONAL FEELINGS TOWARD THEM.

Time to test yourself

In searching for a branch coordinator in a newly organized branch, you have interviewed several capable men and are discussing their merits with members of the district council. You have been particularly impressed with Mr. Kim and you suggest to the council that he would make an excellent choice. They listen politely to your suggestions, but pass over it because Mr. Kim is the youngest and poorest man under consideration. They go on to discuss the other names.

What do you do?

1. You forget about Mr. Kim and let the discussion go on.
2. You see this as an excellent opportunity to instruct the council. You tell them of the importance of giving equal opportunity for advancement to all and then let them make their decision.
3. Indignant, you demand to know the reasoning behind their refusal of Mr. Kim's name for consideration.
4. You urge the council to consider your suggestion again, further suggesting that they attempt to educate the employees of the branch in question as well as Mr. Kim to the proper attitude toward working together unitedly regardless of social rankings.

NOTE REASONS FOR RESPONSE SELECTED. SEE BELOW FOR ANSWERS.

1. In Korea, class distinctions are quite rigid. There is an unwritten code of behavior that is very hard to change. Americans responsible for hiring and promoting need to be aware of this tradition and be sensitive to it. One cannot ignore it. People will not work well unless the hierarchy is correct. You will never fully understand all the complexities yourself, so a local employee who possesses this kind of sensitivity will be extremely useful.
2. You must keep in mind that the original attitude of the council has strong cultural and traditional roots. Therefore, care must be taken in any attempt to counter this tradition. Be as logical and tactful as possible.
3. Not only have you failed to realize that the attitude of the council has cultural roots, but you are also in grave danger of harming their *kibun* and, therefore, their attitude toward you in such a response.
4. This approach is not likely to be as successful as it might be in America. While the council members are not likely to oppose you openly, they are also not likely to follow your advice or abandon their enculturated ideas of the importance of social rank. By asking them to do what for them is impossible, you are only leaving yourself vulnerable to loss of face and placing them in a most uncomfortable position.

Theme summary

This introduction to major themes in Korean culture has been necessarily brief and general. We have tried to choose areas of greatest difference between the Korean and American cultures and areas in which you may find the greatest conflicts. You may be faced with many more problems in other areas, but with a knowledge of the basic themes presented here you may find some help in confronting and solving them as well.

The broad generalizations made in this booklet will not hold true at all times or in all places for attitudes are changing rapidly in Korea. City dwellers, particularly those in Seoul, have shed some of their traditional attitudes and are becoming more Westernized. A gap in attitude between Koreans over thirty and those younger has developed in recent years as many younger Koreans are abandoning some of the habits of their elders which they consider outdated and less productive.

So while you are in Korea you must try to practice the Korean art of "eye measure," *nun-ch'i*. You must study the attitudes of the people with whom you work in Korea in order to know how to respond. You will have more success among the Koreans if you realize the themes of their culture and attempt to use them to your advantage, where possible, or understand them as the bases of some otherwise "inscrutable" action or attitude.

When is a wave goodbye a wave goodbye?

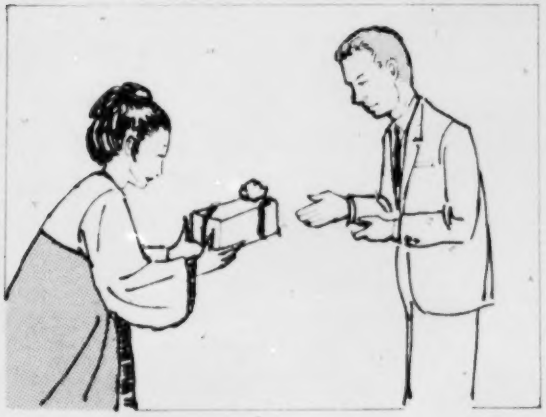
As you prepare for your experience in Korea, you may think you can get along with hand signals and other gestures until you learn to speak the new language. Unfortunately, there are few facial expressions that mean exactly the same thing throughout the whole world. In some countries there are similarities to gestures and expressions used by Americans. However, most likely you will find your natural communication cues being misunderstood or misinterpreted. Of course, Koreans are very tolerant of the ignorant *faux pas* of foreigners. Still, you are more likely to be accepted by the people of Korea if you conform to some of their more important customs. Effective intercultural verbal and nonverbal communication includes the following:

Greetings

While bowing slightly, shake hands with friends, either by taking the other's hand in both of yours or shaking with your right hand while holding your right forearm near the elbow (usually from beneath) with your left hand. It is proper to extend your reach by stretching one hand out farther and touching the extended arm with your other hand.

Shaking hands is an example of a Western custom that has only partially been assimilated in the Korean culture, and that sometimes is incongruous in the traditional context. Although nearly all Korean men will greet you with a handshake, it is not acceptable to offer to shake hands with Korean women. For women, a polite nod of the head is the customary greeting. Young children bow their heads unless invited to shake hands (which invitation is a great honor).

Complete attention is always paid to the person one is greeting. If a visitor desires to bow in the Korean manner, he should bow from the waist, facing the person, with both hands in front of him (usually placed on his thighs) and his eyes dropping to the ground.



Gestures

Although Korean men sometimes hold hands in public, putting an arm around the shoulders or slapping on the back are considered disrespectful unless it is between very close friends. Feet should never be put on a desk or chair. Both hands should be used when giving or handing something to another person and when giving or receiving gifts.

Proper posture while standing or sitting is emphasized in public meetings. In religious gatherings, the legs are not crossed during the prayer and song. At other times they should be crossed cautiously, with knee over knee and the soles and toes pointed downward.

Yawns are smothered in meetings. Dark glasses (and often regular glasses) should be removed while talking to someone.

Except when attending a meeting in an official capacity, do not go directly to the place of honor in a room or at a table unless you have been directed there by your host. Even then, it is polite to refuse to accept the highest seat until forced to do so. This is considered modest good manners.

Visiting

One should be urged two or three times before actually entering a Korean style house. In fact, you are being polite and refined if you wait to be asked to enter a room, sit down, take food, etc., a minimum of two or three times before actually doing so.

When entering a traditional Korean house, be sure to remove your shoes even though your host may protest that you may leave them on. If you fail to take off your shoes in a house, not only will you possibly damage the floors, but you may carry dirt into the house from the street.

After a visit or interview, the host sees his guest to the door or even outside before saying goodbye.

Gifts

Use both hands to give and receive gifts. To extend your reach, present or receive the gift with one hand while touching (usually from beneath) the forearm or elbow with the other (see picture at left).

Gifts are not opened at the same time they are received unless the giver insists repeatedly. If money is given as a gift, it must be enclosed in an envelope.

Eating

Avoid eating or snacking on the street or in public places. The meal may be eaten with chopsticks or a spoon. Eating noises may be very loud compared to American standards. Loud eating noises are considered a compliment to your host.

People usually converse after the meal is finished. Guests never joke about the food. Food or other items should be passed with the right hand while the left hand is supporting the right forearm.

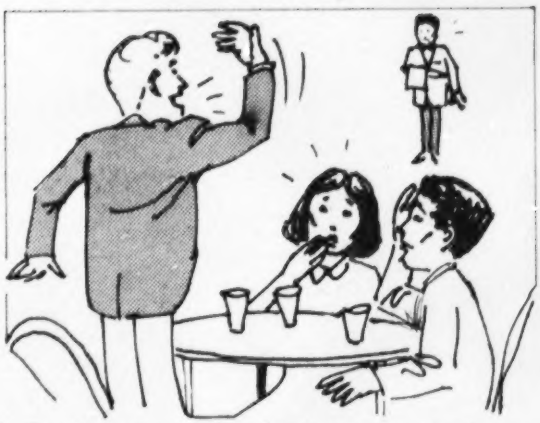
Always cover your mouth with one hand as you use a toothpick.

Although it is not socially taboo, never drink water in Korea unless you are certain it has been boiled properly. A great many of the diseases plaguing the Koreans are carried in the water, and even the more educated Koreans boil their water to avoid possible infection. Even though most tap water is safe to drink in the big cities, Koreans customarily boil it. Koreans rarely drink cold water. In most public eating places and homes barley tea is served before and after the meal It is perfectly safe to drink.

Never blow your nose at the table. At any time it must be done very discreetly. Sniffling is acceptable.

General courtesies

* Avoid talking or laughing loudly in any situation. The mark of a gentleman is a quiet reserve maintained at all times in Korea, just as in the West. Loud talking draws undue attention to you and is a sign of bad manners. Remember to speak slower and not louder when addressing those who you may think have trouble understanding English.



* Do not carry or show large amounts of money in public places unless absolutley necessary. Not only is this considered poor taste, but you may also place yourself in danger of losing your money.

* It is not unusual to observe a man urinating at the side of the road or children running around without clothes. These are acceptable customs. Because few rural homes have any indoor plumbing, it is common for rural adults and children to bathe in streams.

* Do not feel it necessary to tip everyone who serves you during your visit, with the possible exception of the employees in some of the more modern tourist hotels. Tipping is purely a Western custom and may be viewed as an affront by many Koreans.

* Perhaps most important, do not under any circumstances compromise your own scruples in order to conform to those of the Korean society. Koreans respect most those foreigners who have the moral courage to be true to their own consciences regardless of where they are.

Breaking language barriers

If you cannot speak another people's language, you are terribly handicapped in communicating with them. Because language is the most important communication tool in any society, it is possibly the area of your greatest security. You will come into the whole new world of Korea where you may not know the Korean language at all. You will be stripped of your primary means of interacting with others.

Your purpose and length of stay in Korea will determine the language proficiency you will need or desire. Language training is available through schools, self-study, and various language booklets written especially for travelers.

If you plan to stay for even a short time in Korea, it would be advisable to obtain a Korean conversation booklet. In case you find yourself with no other materials, this "survival" section can assist you in communicating in Korean. The following are simple words and phrases to master:

ENGLISH	KOREAN PRONUNCIATION
Standard greeting	ahn-N'YUNG HAH-shim-nee-gah?
My name is. . .	CHEH EE-duh-mun *(name)* IHM-nee-dah.
What is your name?	SUN-sang-neem EE-duh-mun MOHK-shim-nik-gah?
I am happy to meet you.	PONG-gahp SOOM-nee-dah.
Thank you.	KAHM-sah-HAHM-nee-dah.
You are welcome.	CHAHM-mun-NAY-oh.
Excuse me.	shih-lay-HAHM-nee-dah.
Goodbye	AHN-n'yung-hee kah-SHEEP-sh'yo
Yes	NAY
No	AH-nim-nee-dah
Yesterday	AW-jeh
Today	OH-nuhl
I do not understand.	ee-eh-HAH-djee-mote HAHM-nee-dah.
Do you understand me?	ee-ah-HAHM-nee-kah?
Sir, Mr.	SUN-sang-neem
Madam, Mrs.	AH-djoo-muh-neem
Miss	Miss
Go straight ahead.	TOKE-pah-doh kaw-SHEEP-sh'yo.
Turn right.	OH-rin CHOH-kuh-roh KAW-say-oh.
Turn left.	WAYN CHOH-kuh-roh KAW-say-oh.
Where is. . .?	*(thing)* OH-dee-eh iss-SOOM-nik-gah?
a toilet	WHAH-djong-shil
a doctor	WEE-sah
a hotel	Hotel
a bank	Bank --*or*-- un-HANG
the movie	KOOK-djong
a restaurant	Restaurant --*or*-- OOM-shik-juhm
I want to eat.	NAH-nun MOKE-go-ship-SOOM-nee-dah.
I want the bill.	NAH-nun YUNG-soo-djoong-uhl-wahn-HAHM-nee-dah.
I want a room.	NAH-nun PONGL wahn-HAHM-nee-dah.
How much is it?	uhl-MAH IHM-nee-gah?
Please stop here.	NEH-dee-oh DJOO-sheep-sh'yo.
I am an American.	NAH-nuhn MEE-gook sah-RAHM IHM-nee-dah.
Do you speak English?	YUNG-oh HAHM-nik-gah?
Will you please help me?	DOH-wah DJOO-sheep-sh'yo?

sign language

An excellent way to orient yourself in a new culture is to become familiar with the many signs you see. Until you learn to ask the location of the nearest restroom, it might be helpful at least to be able to recognize the sign. It also helps you to find clean air and to stay away from dangerous areas. Even if you can't speak the language, you at least can walk around looking like you know where you are going and what you are doing.

Many signs in Korea are written with the Chinese characters and are often accompanied by a picture illustrating the sign. For example:

Restroom
화장실
Men
남 or 男
Women
여 or 女
Do not enter
들어가지 마시오
Entrance
출입구
Exit
출구 or 나가는곳
Danger
위험
No smoking
담배를 피우지 마십시오
Bus stop
뻐스 정류장
Beauty salon
미 장원 or 미용실
Barber shop
이 발 소
Bank
은 행
Post office
우체국
Train station
기차 정류장
Bus station
뻐스 정류장
Film
필림
Go
가십시오
Stop
서십시오

Plaid pants, sport shirt, hat, camera, and shades

You are dressed in your "travel duds" and plan to buy a beautiful oriental screen before you fly home. Sound exciting? It should be. However, if you are not familiar with Korean shopping procedures, you may find yourself lost in a maze of specialized stores and never locate one that sells oriental screens.

There are differences in just about every aspect of Korean life. A glance through this section will help you plan your time and avoid harassment by "the little things."

Monetary system

The basic unit of Korean money is the *won*, with current exchange of about 500 *won* to the dollar. There are five coins and six bills in common use in Korea today. The coins are in one, five, ten, fifty, and one hundred *won* denominations, and the bills are in ten, fifty, one hundred, five hundred, five thousand, and ten thousand *won* denominations.

In a choice restaurant 1200 *won* (about $2.40) is not an uncommon price for a meal. Prices in Western-style hotels are often as high as in the United States. Bus fare will be about 35 *won* (a little more than five cents). A hair cut will cost from 100 to 600 *won* (20¢ to $1.20).

Public transportation

Koreans in large urban centers depend on public transportation systems. The most common mode of public transportation is the bus. The number on the bus indicates the route it follows; a detailed description is given in Korean on the side of the bus. One may enter through the side door. Girls circulate through the bus to collect the fare. When your destination is approaching, maneuver so as to be near the door and able to get off at the desired stop.

Intra-city buses leave regularly from the bus station. Some travel on the expressways directly to your destination with no stops. Others stop at many small towns along the way.

A newly-completed subway in Seoul is a great help to commuters.

Taxis are available in all large cities and most smaller ones but are somewhat more expensive than public buses. However, they are much less expensive than in the United States. All taxis have a meter on the dashboard that shows the amount to be paid. If you are in a large city and don't know Korean, you can best get around in a taxi. Give the driver a note with your destination written in Korean, if possible.

Foreign visitors and many Koreans travel by train between Seoul and all other major cities south. Purchase tickets at the train station. Some trains make non-stop trips; others stop at a number of points along the route.

Housing

Many Koreans prefer to live in homes built in the traditional Korean style. Farmers usually live in a one-story house with unbaked clay or cement block walls and rice straw-thatched roofs.

Korean houses are built with heavy squared wooden posts set at each corner. Rounded rafters over large wooden beams form the ceilings. In upper class homes roofing tiles cover a thick bed of insulating earth. The walls are filled with stone, mud, and plaster. Houses usually are surrounded by high stone fences or walls.

The home has a large center room which serves as parlor and office, at either end of which are smaller rooms for the use of male members of the family. The women live in inner apartments. The

living room serves as a dining and sewing room in summer, and may be used for weddings and funerals. The kitchen floor is usually beneath the level of other rooms and is frequently made of cement.

Other floors are made of flagstones plastered over with clay and covered with thick oiled paper. Underneath runs a series of flue-like passageways. In the country, fires are built under the floor level in a stone fireplace just after the evening meal, and left burning through the night. Since the bed mattress is placed directly on the floor, it remains comfortably warm all night. The stored-up heat also keeps the interior of the house warm. In large cities, large charcoal briquettes or steam heat is used.

Students and other single people often live in boarding houses (*hasook*). Meals are provided by the landlady and accommodations, though modest, are generally clean and inexpensive.

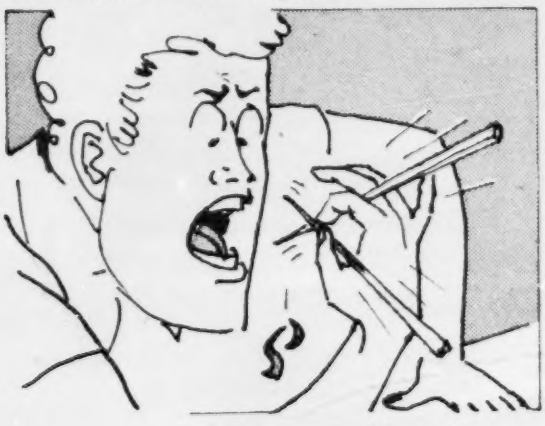
In recent years many new housing tracts have appeared throughout Korea, particularly in the cities, which are more Western in appearance and include modern household appliances. Television antennas abound. Some apartment buildings and subdivisions are built especially for foreigners working in Korea. Because of the improved facilities they offer, they are considerably more expensive than most homes and may be occupied by wealthier Koreans.

Diet

Each meal includes a bowl of rice, fish, soup, and vegetables, including *kimch'i*. Meat is expensive and is not commonly eaten, except in upper class households. Most families eat meat only on special occasions. Even so, Koreans know that Americans like meat and will try to serve it for foreign visitors.

Kimch'i is one of the favorite foods of the Koreans. This side-dish is prepared with cabbages and radishes preserved in salt indefinitely. Many seasonings, including hot peppers and garlic, are then added and this pickle-like vegetable is stored in earthen jars.

Koreans are also fond of fish and steamed meat. *Pulgogi* is an elegant food that Koreans love to eat and serve to guests. It consists of beef marinated in a sauce and then charcoal roasted over a brazier. Fresh vegetables are enjoyed in season. The common dessert is fresh fruit in season. Hamburger, pizza, ice cream, and other common Western foods are now available in some markets.



The traditional eating utensils of the Koreans are a round, shallow spoon (usually metal) with a long handle, and chopsticks. Kitchens are modest with very few conveniences. Only in the homes of the wealthy and a few urban apartment buildings do Koreans have gas or electric stoves, ovens, refrigerators, and running hot water.

Family rites

BIRTHDAYS

The two most important birthdays in the life of a Korean are the first and sixtieth. Each is the occasion of a great feast for family and friends. Other birthdays are not even celebrated. Everyone considers his birthday to be on New Year's Day.

At the first birthday party, the child is dressed in colorful traditional costume and is seated amidst piles of rice cakes, cookies, and fruits. The 100th day celebration of infants is also very important.

Called *hwan'gap chanch'i*, the sixtieth birthday is colorfully observed in celebration of longevity. The person celebrating his sixtieth birthday is offered foods and wine.

FUNERALS

Funerals are very important ceremonies. Traditional Confucian funerals are elaborate rituals. From the moment of death until the bier departs for the interment, breakfast and supper are served to the dead--the food he liked best during his lifetime. The chief mourner and relatives who are present weep for the dead.

In large funerals, the casket is borne by a number of men followed by the chief mourner, relatives, friends, and weeping servants. A red banner with the name and title of the deceased in white letters is used to lead the procession, and numerous lantern bearers march on either side. The relatives and friends lower the casket into the ground. A dirt mound is covered with live grass strips to complete the burial.

When the burial is complete, a tablet in memory of the dead, made of chestnut wood, is brought to the home and installed in the family shrine, to be honored for three years.

WEDDINGS

Traditional wedding ceremonies usually take place at the home of the bride. The newlyweds

then go to the house of the bridegroom together, the bride being carried in a sedan chair. Traditional wedding ceremonies are now rarely held as more people prefer simple Western style weddings with a minister performing the marriage. These ceremonies are usually held in public and commercial wedding halls.

An increasing number of men and women meet in business firms or schools and decide to marry at their will without going through matchmakers. The family no longer makes all decisions in the selection of a mate.

The traditional marriage and funeral ceremonies have been simplified to save expenses. The maximum period of mourning is reduced and such rituals are much less elaborate.

Festivals and holidays

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Early in the morning hours on the lunar New Year's Day, all relatives gather at the house of the eldest son to perform a sacrificial rite in memory of their deceased ancestors. Family members generally visit the home of the oldest living family members and bow three times in respect to their elders. Children usually collect coins when they pay honor to their elders in this manner.

TAEBORUM

On the 15th day of the first month on the lunar calendar, all villagers sing and dance in groups. In some rural towns, wrestling is held. At night the villagers view the first full moon of the year by torchlight. The moon viewing, called *talmaji*, is a shamanistic expression of their wish for long life, rich crops, and other good things.

HANSIK

The 108th day after the winter solstice is *Hansik* or cold food day, when people offer tributes of wine and foods at their ancestors' graves.

TANO

The fifth day of the fifth month is *Tano*, one of the most celebrated holidays for Koreans. On this day many contests of strength are held.

CHUSOK

Also known as the Moon Festival, *Chusok* is the harvest festival. It falls on the fifteenth day of the eighth month according to the lunar calendar. Koreans offer tributes of food and wine to their ancestors, after which they participate in the feast. Farmers' bands perform traditional dances and music with Korean musical instruments, and little children often receive presents.

OTHER HOLIDAYS:

Sam-Il Independence Movement (March 1), Arbor Day (April 5), Buddha's birthday (April 8 on the lunar calendar), Children's Day (May 5), Memorial Day (June 6), Constitution Day (July 17), Independence from Japan Day (August 15), National Foundation Day (October 3), Korean Language Day (October 9), United Nations Day (October 24), and Christmas (December 25; not widely celebrated).

Work

Sixty percent of the people in South Korea are farmers, who live mainly in rural villages and cultivate small irrigated plots, often no more than two or three acres in size. Small family stores are usually open seven days a week, from sunup to about 10:00 p.m., but the larger department stores in urban areas close earlier. From 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. a curfew prevents citizens from being on the streets.

Names

Korean names generally consist of three Chinese characters. One character forms the family name, one character forms the generation name, and the third is the personal name which corresponds to a Westerner's first name. Koreans use the surname first, such as "Ji, Moon Won," or "Lee, Kyung Ah," in which case Ji and Lee are surnames. A few families use two characters to form the surname, such as "Sun-woo" or "Nam-kung."

The personal name is believed to determine a person's destiny, so Korean parents give names boding good fortune to their sons, such as Soo-nam (man of long life) or Soo-bok (long life and pros-

perity) or other names meaning long life, good fortune, wealth, nobility, prosperity, virtue, happiness, greatness, and so on. Unlike Western and Japanese customs, a Korean woman does not change her name when she marries.

Clothing

Most Koreans wear Western clothing, particularly in cities. In the countryside, the traditional dress is still seen. Many prefer to wear traditional costumes at home or on holidays.

The Korean traditional costume consists of a jacket and trousers for both sexes and a skirt added for females. Men wear a vest over the jacket and, in public, a long flowing coat (*dooroomagi*). Very recently, a number of women have also begun wearing *dooroomagi* in winter. The jacket, trousers, and *dooroomagi* are single in summer, double lined in spring and autumn, and quilted in winter. In cold seasons, women wear a fur lined vest.

A great variety of synthetic fibers have replaced cotton, hemp, and silk in clothing.

The beginning

You are now at the "real beginning" of your cultural experience in Korea. You will find that the old cliche, "Experience is the best teacher," will be true.

You will undoubtedly learn much more from your own experiences, successes, and failures than from this Learning Aid. However, this information gives you some principles to get you started effectively communicating with the people of Korea. Review this Learning Aid as needed. Only as you experience similar situations will you really begin to understand what you have learned.

While in Korea you will be tempted at times to wonder about the "strange foreigners" around you. At these times, it would be good to remind yourself that the Koreans are just reflecting their culture and that, in fact you are the "foreigner," the one who is different.

The concepts presented in this booklet will not always apply in every situation or in every part of the country. It does provide some of the most basic facts about Korean behavior and some of the premises upon which Korean life is based.

You are going to make mistakes. But don't let this worry you excessively. The Koreans have a great sense of humor and will understand that you are new to their culture. Because of this they will accept more mistakes from you than they would from someone of their own culture. However, don't let this goodwill on their part make your efforts any less than wholehearted. As you try to speak their language, both linguistically and culturally, you will be surprised at the new dimensions of your experience.

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